

CONFESSION OF PRUETT UNTIES KNOT

(Continued from Page One.)

the sidewalk. Pruett states that he fired one shot in the direction of the stairway. He says that he saw a man in a gray suit following Rubenstein down the stairs. (Swearingen wore a gray suit on the night of his death.) He does not say in his story how many shots were fired by Rubenstein while in Swearingen's room. "Red," says he left the room ahead of Rubenstein at Rock Island. Pruett stated. He climbed in a box car and we became separated. I have not seen him since. I don't know where he is or whether he is still alive. Swearingen got him pretty bad."

Pruett's story says that Rubenstein was shot three times by Swearingen, who it has been proved carried his gun, a 25 calibre automatic, at the stick-up men. Rubenstein was wounded twice in the left hand, while one ball struck him just over the heart. He bled profusely, Pruett says, and barely managed to hold up until the pair reached Rock Island and a hotel room, where Pruett brought bandages and medicine for the relief of his partner.

Implicate "Bricky" Wood. The confession implicated "Bricky" Wood, a Chicago gambler, as the leader of the Pruett-Rubenstein-Sherman gang. Wood is said by Pruett to have planned the Aledo

stick-up, aided by Quentin Sherman of Aledo. Pruett's story implicated besides the men already in custody, Frank Bowling, Robert Tomlinson, Sherman, Wood and Rubenstein and an auto driver known to the gang as Leo and believed by the authorities to be "Speed" Haskins of Galesburg, who was arrested early in the case and brought to Aledo for questioning, and Cliff Händgerter of Galesburg, who it is understood left his home for parts unknown shortly after the Swearingen shooting.

Sherman Refutes Confession. Sherman, unaware of Pruett's confession, has refuted his statement made before Sheriff Fleming soon after his incarceration. Sherman now says that the statement was given under pressure. "I was forced to make that statement," Sherman says, after consulting with his attorneys, Watson and Duval of Aledo. None of the men in custody know that Pruett has confessed. "Red" on the other hand, believes that Sherman has told everything and is exceedingly bitter in attitude towards the Aledo man. Pruett's demeanor is that of a hardened criminal. He spoke lightly of his part in the tragedy and expressed no regrets over the taking of a human life. He confessed in the hope of being shown leniency. Pruett is only 20 years of age. He is shown the index finger of his right hand, explaining its recent loss by stating that his hand had been caught in a corn shredder while he was employed in farm work in Michigan some weeks ago.

Believe Solution Near. The arrest of Pruett and the untangling of the jumbled mass of evidence in the investigation of Swearingen's death and the identity of his slayers, marks the beginning of the end of weeks of hard work on

the part of Sheriff J. P. Fleming. "The end is in sight," Sheriff Fleming stated today. With the arrest of Rubenstein, the complete roundup of the principals in the murder of Robert Swearingen will have been accomplished. The work of Sheriff Fleming in this case has occasioned much favorable comment in Mercer county, his record thus far being an extremely favorable one.

Appended is a form of the confession given to Sheriff Fleming last night:

"After the Galesburg stickup, Rubenstein and I went to the Park hotel at Quincy, where we stayed until we got a telegram from Squint. We met 'Bricky' and 'Squint' at Bushnell. 'Bricky' bought a gun here and we went to Colchester. From there we went back to Galesburg. We had some whisky and were all drinking. In Galesburg we met at a school house yard and 'Bricky' started to talk about Aledo and told us that 'Squint' had left for Aledo with a man named Leo. He did not tell us why 'Squint' went to Aledo. 'Bricky' said that he was going to see if he could get some fellows to drive us to Aledo. The men got said they were brothers-in-law and one was a head electrician for an electric street car company in Galesburg. They were supposed to drive us to Aledo and back and get their money at the other end. We went to 'Bricky's' room and got a coat and a gun. He gave me the gun. Then we started for Aledo. We went through some town, Monmouth, I think, and asked how to get to Aledo. We got into Aledo about 1 o'clock, I think. We sat in the car somewhere about a block from town and 'Bricky' got out to look for 'Squint.' Bolling got out to get something to eat, he said. Tom started to repair the car

and Rubenstein and I sat in the car. 'Bricky' and Bolling came back in about 15 minutes and got in the car and we drove up to the side of some house or building, close to the railroad tracks. The drivers were in the game from the start and they were to wait for us with the car. We got out and walked around the corner and then came back and walked a block west and a block north. The drivers sat in the cars smoking cigars. They said they were going to drive around and find the quickest way out of town. There was a Ford car standing across the street. One of the drivers turned off the gas in this car and they said that they had broken it in two places. There was no other car near that we knew of. 'Bricky' went away and we stood near the car until he came back. He said, 'You can hear the money rattling upstairs. It is about the best time to go up.' Rubenstein loaded his gun and went up. I followed. He went to the door and tried to get in, but he couldn't, so he knocked and someone said, 'Who is that?' and Rubenstein said, 'A friend.' A big tall fellow opened the door a bit and Rubenstein stuck his gun in and ordered them to raise their hands. The men tried to shut the door, but Rubenstein pushed it open. I was watching a door on the outside until Rubenstein got the door opened and then I went in. He told the fellows to stand up and put their faces the other way, and they all obeyed. I had a 44 and Rubenstein a 45. We started to search them. I was on the opposite side of the room from Swearingen and Rubenstein had his hand in Swearingen's pocket when Swearingen shot him. Rubenstein was shot three times. I tried to shoot one bullet, but my gun did not go off. I backed behind Ruben-

stein and ran downstairs. I fired one shot up the stairs, but it didn't hit anyone. Some man in a gray suit came down after us. I ran out to the machine and jumped in and closed the door after me. Rubenstein sat on the step until we passed the railroad track. Rubenstein fired back four or five times towards the building. I asked Rubenstein, 'Did he get you?' and he said, 'Yes, but I gave him plenty.' The drivers did not drive under threat. My gun was empty and Rubenstein reloaded his when we were out a ways. When we were out about four miles, I think, the drivers thought someone was coming after us and stopped and told us to get out and lay in a cornfield until daylight, and they would come back and get us. Rubenstein walked around in front of the car and pulled his blouse back and we saw that he was badly wounded. We did not tell the drivers that we would kill them. We walked through a cornfield and then back to a road. I threw my gun away, some place in the cornfield. At Norwood I bought the tickets to Rock Island and we rode into Twentieth street. We occupied separate seats. Rubenstein had my handkerchief, two shirts and some underwear over the wound, but it was bleeding so badly that the blood came out on the outside of his shirt. I got some adhesive tape and gauze in Rock Island and dressed his wound. I left Rubenstein at Rock Island. He climbed in a box car and we became separated. He may be dead, for I have not seen him since. From Rock Island I went to Chicago and from there to Davidson, Mich., where I worked on a farm for a few weeks. I had my finger taken off in a corn shredding machine on a farm near Davidson.

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